

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 027958

MADRID AND LISBON FOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, AO, US

SUBJECT:ANGOLA; DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JORGE

REF: (A) LUSAKA 3620; (B) STATE 275569

WE ARE REPEATING BELOW PRETORIA 6534 DATED DECEMBER 12,
1977 FOR YOUR INFO:

1. SUMMARY: IN A LENGTHY CONVERSATION WITH US FOLLOWING
THE MEETING WITH THE CONTACT GROUP, ANGOLAN FOREIGN
MINISTER PAULO JORGE STRESSED THAT ANGOLA WAS TRULY NON-
ALIGNED AND WANTED TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED
STATES. ANGOLA WAS JEALOUS OF ITS INDEPENDENCE AND
RESENTED THE ATTEMPTS OF ANYONE, INCLUDING THE SOVIET
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UNION, TO EXERCISE UNDUE INFLUENCE OVER ITS AFFAIRS.
HE ATTRIBUTED THE US FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE ANGOLA TO THE
FACT THAT ANGOLA WAS MOVING TOWARD SOCIALISM, AND ACCUSED
THE USG OF CONTINUING TO SUPPORT UNITA, FNLA AND FLEC.
ON NAMIBIA, HE SAID THE CONTACT GROUP HAD PRESENTED NEW
IDEAS AND PROPOSALS WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CAREFULLY
STUDY. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER COMPLETION OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE CONTACT
GROUP AND ANGOLAN OFFICIALS (REFTEL A), AMBASSADOR

MCHENRY SUGGESTED TO FONMIN JORGE THAT IT MIGHT BE

USEFUL TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MCHENRY'S VISIT TO DISCUSS BILATERAL MATTERS. SINCE WE WERE DEPARTING EARLY NEXT MORNING, JORGE SUGGESTED AN IMMEDIATE MEETING ALTHOUGH HE WAS DUE AT ANOTHER IN A DAILY SERIES OF PREPARATORY MEETINGS FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS. THE CONVERSATION, WHICH --DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCES OF OPINION--WAS FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT, LASTED ONE AND A HALF HOURS. JORGE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BERNARDINE SIGUEROS, HEAD OF THE WESTERN COUNTRIES DIVISION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

3. MCHENRY BEGAN BY AGAIN THANKING THE ANGOLANS FOR THE WARM RECEPTION GIVEN THE CONTACT GROUP AND THEN MADE THE POINTS PROVIDED REFTEL (B). HE ADDED THAT DESPITE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT COMMUNICATION BE MAINTAINED AND THAT WE EACH MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO AT LEAST UNDERSTAND THE OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW. (DURING THE CONVERSATION, WE RESPONDED TO JORGE'S COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS WHEN HE MADE THEM. HOWEVER, FOR THE SAKE OF CLARITY, IN THIS REPORT WE FIRST PRESENT THE MAJOR POINTS HE MADE, THEN THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONSE.)

4. JORGE SAID HE ALSO WELCOMED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A FRANK DISCUSSION AND AGREED THAT COMMUNICATION WAS ESSENTIAL. HE WAS ESPECIALLY DISTURBED THAT MUCH OF THE REPORTING IN FOREIGN MEDIA REGARDING ANGOLA WAS DISTORTED AND THAT AS A RESULT THE USG HAD AN INCORRECT IMPRESSION OF THE SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY. FOR EXAMPLE, RECENTLY HE HAD LISTENED TO THE PROMINENCE GIVEN BY VOA TO INACCURATE CLAIMS BY GEORGE SANGUMBA (UNITA) THAT UNITA CONTROLLED TEN ANGOLAN PROVINCES. ANGOLA DID NOT HIDE THE FACT THAT IT HAD NUMEROUS PROBLEMS INCLUDING DISSIDENT ELEMENTS, BUT IT WISHED ACCURATE REPORTING OF THOSE PROBLEMS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT A UNITA OFFICE WAS ABOUT TO BE OPENED IN NEW YORK AND SAID THAT THIS WOULD ADD TO THE MISINFORMATION. WHY WOULD THE US ALLOW SUCH ACTIVITIES?

5. JORGE SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE US WITHHELD RECOGNITION AND HAD NOT EVEN AVAILED ITSELF OF OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK. WAS IT, HE ASKED, BECAUSE ANGOLA WAS SOCIALIST? (HE RETURNED TO THIS THEME SEVERAL TIMES, CONVEYING IN AN UNDERSTATED YET QUITE CLEAR WAY THAT HE BELIEVED THE US WAS ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD ANGOLA BECAUSE THE LATTER WAS FOLLOWING A COURSE TOWARD SOCIALISM.) HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ANGOLA WAS NOT SOCIALIST YET. (THE "YET" WAS PREGNANT IN TONE AND ITS IMPLICATION MAY BE

SEEN IN THE SIGNS PLASTERED ON WALLS IN LUANDA: "WE ARE INDEPENDENT; WE WILL BE SOCIALIST." (IT COULD BE THAT BECOMING A SOCIALIST STATE, WHATEVER THAT MEANS, WILL BE ONE OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PARTY CONGRESS.)

6. WHY, SAID JORGE, DID THE US HARP ON THE CUBA QUESTION DID NOT ANGOLA, AS AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY, HAVE THE RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF AND SEEK ASSISTANCE WHEREVER IT WISHED?
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AND "ON WHAT MORAL BASIS" DID THE US OBJECT TO THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN TROOPS WHEN THE US HAD ITS MILITARY FORCES STATIONED AROUND THE WORLD, EVEN IN CUBA? THE US DECISION TO MAKE THE WITHDRAWAL OF CUBAN FORCES A PRE-CONDITION TO RECOGNITION WAS "CLEAR INTERFERENCE" IN ANGOLA'S AFFAIRS.

7. JORGE NOTED THAT NO ONE IN THE WEST HAD OBJECTED WHEN SOUTH AFRICA HAD INVADDED ANGOLA. FURTHERMORE, TODAY ZAIRE AND FRANCE WERE SUPPORTING FNLA, FLEC, AND UNITA.

8. THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF ANGOLA'S FOREIGN POLICY WAS TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES. ANGOLA WAS GENUINELY NON-ALIGNED. IT DEFINITELY WANTED NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE US BUT WAS UNWILLING TO SACRIFICE PRINCIPLE AND ALLOW OTHERS TO INFLUENCE ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE WISHED THE US TO WATCH, BECAUSE IN NEAR FUTURE ANGOLA MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY, HOWEVER PAINFUL, TO DEMONSTRATE ITS INDEPENDENCE EVEN TO ITS FRIENDS. THERE WERE THOSE WHO HAD ASSISTED THE MPLA IN THE PAST AND THEN TRIED TO DOMINATE IT. THEY COULD NOT DOMINATE THE MPLA WHEN IT WAS DEPENDENT; THEY WOULD NOT DOMINATE AN INDEPENDENT ANGOLA. SPECIFICALLY, ANGOLA ACCEPTED COMMUNIST SUPPORT, BUT THEY COULD NOT BE "ALIGNED" WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

9. JORGE STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT THE US WAS WAITING EITHER FOR THE MPLA TO SUBDUE ITS OPPOSITION OR FOR THE DISSIDENTS TO TRIUMPH. HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY RELIABLE SOURCES, WHICH DID NOT IDENTIFY, THAT THE US CONTINUED TO SUPPORT FLEC, UNITA AND FNLA. MOREOVER, THE ANGOLAN GOVT KNEW THAT A MAJOR ATTACK WAS PLANNED AND WHO WAS PLANNING IT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ANGOLA FACED SERIOUS
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INTERNAL PROBLEMS WITH DISSIDENTS BUT MAINTAINED THEY WERE NOT AS SERIOUS AS PICTURED. ANGOLA WANTED TO END THESE DIFFICULTIES AND TURN ITS ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUS DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS IT NOW FACED.

10. TURNING TO THE NAMIBIAN ISSUE, JORGE SAID THAT ANGOLA VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE MEETING JUST CONCLUDED

WITH THE CONTACT GROUP. HE THOUGHT THE DISCUSSION REVEALED NEW IDEAS AND PROPOSALS OF WHICH HE WAS PREVIOUSLY UNAWARE. HIS GOVT WOULD THEREFORE HAVE TO STUDY VERY CAREFULLY THE POINTS COVERED IN THE DISCUSSION ANGOLA WISHED TO SEE THE NAMIBIAN QUESTION RESOLVED AND THEREBY BE RELIEVED OF THE BURDEN OF SUPPORTING SWAPO AND OPPOSING SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR UNITA. IN ADDITIO THE FEAR OF ANOTHER SOUTH AFRICAN INVASION OF ANGOLA WOULD BE ENDED.

11. FINALLY, JORGE NOTED THAT HE HAD AUTHORIZED THE ANGOLAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UN TO DISCUSS NORMALIZATION WITH THE US. WHY HAD THE US BROKEN OFF THESE DISCUSSIONS?

12. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, MCHENRY FOLLOWED THE GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN REFTEL (B). IN ADDITION, WE RESPONDED TO JORGE'S REMARKS AND QUESTIONS.

13. WE SAID THAT WE WERE UNAWARE OF ANY MOVE TO ESTABLISH A UNITA OFFICE IN THE US BUT HOPED HE UNDERSTOOD THE NATURE OF US SOCIETY. IF ANY ORGANIZATION REGISTERED AS A FOREIGN AGENT, THE USG COULD NOT, UNDER LAW, RESTRICT ITS FREE SPEECH. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE IF, AS JORGE STATED, AN OFFICE WAS TO BE HEADED BY US CITIZEN. WE WOULD STATE THAT UNITA OFFICE IN NEW YORK WOULD IN NO WAY REPRESENT USG SUPPORT, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED, GIVEN THE PAST, IF ANGOLANS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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SKEPTICAL.

14. WE DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY CURRENT BASIS FOR THE ALLEGATION THAT THE US SUPPORTED UNITA, FLEC OR FNLA. THE USG WAS FIRMLY OF THE VIEW THAT ANGOLANS SHOULD BE FREE TO DECIDE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDERS. SIMILARLY, IT WAS UP TO ANGOLANS TO DECIDE ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASIS OF THEIR GOVT. WE AS A PEOPLE HAD OUR PREFERENCE AND ON OCCASION MAY HAVE BEEN TOO JEALOUS IN EXPRESSING THAT PREFERENCE TO OTHERS. HOWEVER, WE KNEW THAT THERE WAS DIVERSITY AMONG NATIONS AND THAT ALL NATIONS WOULD HAVE TO LIVE WITH THAT FACT. AGAIN, WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BY ANGOLAN SKEPTICISM. THE PAST WAS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO LIVE DOWN, AND WE WERE AWARE THAT US POLICY WOULD BE JUDGED BY CURRENT ACTIONS RATHER THAN PROTESTATIONS.

15. WE AGREED THAT THERE WAS NEED FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION AND THAT THERE MIGHT BE INSUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE IN

THE US ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA. HOWEVER, ANGOLA, BY PERMITTING MORE ACCESS BY JOURNALISTS, COULD DO ITS PART TO HELP ENSURE THAT THE WORLD WAS MORE ACCURATELY INFORMED. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE NOTED THE POSITIVE PICTURE OF MOZAMBIQUE WHICH HAD EMERGED FROM A RECENT SERIES OF ARTICLES BY MICHAEL KAUFMAN OF THE NEW YORK TIMES. ON THE OTHER HAND, NO INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE TO REFUTE THE SERIES OF ARTICLES BY LEON DASH IN THE WASHINGTON POST DEPICTING BROAD SUPPORT FOR UNITA.

16. ON THE QUESTION OF CUBAN TROOPS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO US RECOGNITION, MCHENRY STATED THAT IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ANGOLAN SITUATION PRESENTED FACTORS THAT STRUCK SENSITIVE CHORDS AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES. FIRST, CUBA WAS AN ISSUE IN AMERICAN POLITICS. CUBA HAD VIOLATED MANY OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH WE STOOD, HAD ATTEMPTED TO OVERTHROW GOVTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND HAD PLACED A THREAT ON OUR OWN DOORSTEP. WE KNEW THE CUBANS WERE SURROGATES OF THE SOVIETS.

17. SECOND, THERE WAS THE QUESTION OF IDEOLOGY. WE MUST CANDIDLY RECOGNIZE THE AMERICANS ARE SUSPICIOUS OF COUNTRIES WHICH APPEAR TO BE IN THE COMMUNIST CAMP, DESPITE THEIR AVOWAL OF NON-ALIGNMENT. THE CUBAN PRESENCE AND SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ANGOLA MADE THE SITUATION MORE DIFFICULT.

18. FINALLY, THERE WAS A GENUINE DOUBT ON THE PART OF MANY AMERICANS THAT THE MPLA GOVT EXERCISED EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER ANGOLA. MANY HOLD THAT THE MPLA ATTAINED AND MAINTAINED POWER THROUGH THE USE OF FOREIGN TROOPS. THUS, THERE WAS DOUBT THAT THE MPLA GOVT MET ACCEPTED CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION. PRESS REPORTS, SUCH AS THOSE WRITTEN BY SASH, IMPLIED THAT WERE IT NOT FOR THE CUBANS, AN ACCOMMODATION WOULD HAVE TO BE REACHED BETWEEN MPLA AND THOSE GROUPS THAT ACTIVELY OPPOSED IT IN ANGOLA.

19. ON THE QUESTION OF CONTACTS IN NEW YORK, MCHENRY EMPHASIZED THAT THESE WERE NOT BROKEN OFF. HOWEVER, WE HAD TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH DISCUSSIONS WOULD ONLY FIND US REPEATING THAT CONDITIONS DID NOT YET EXIST FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. NONE-THELESS, US REPS AT THE UN, PARTICULARLY AMBASSADOR YOUNG, HAD TRIED TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE ANGOLAN PERMANENT REP. WE KNEW, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ANGOLANS WERE MOST INTERESTED IN NAMIBIA AND THEREFORE HAD TRIED

TO KEEP THEM INFORMED. SIMILARLY, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF
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'HE LAW, THE US HAD TRIED TO BE HELPFUL WITH HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLA.

20. COMMENT: JORGE CLEARLY WANTED ONCE AGAIN TO GET
THE MESSAGE TO THE US GOVT THAT ANGOLA IS NOT TIED TO THE
SOVIET UNION AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
RELATIONS WITH US--THE SOONER THE BETTER. NEVERTHELESS,
AS A SOVEREIGN STATE, ANGOLA CANNOT AGREE TO MODIFY ITS
MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA AS A PRICE TO PAY FOR
US RECOGNITION. CUBAN TROOPS WILL BE REDUCED IN NUMBER
OR WITHDRAWN ONLY AS CIRCUMSTANCES (I.E., THE COURSE OF
THE MPLA'S STRUGGLE WITH UNITA, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT
FNLA AND FLEC, AND THE PRESENCE OF A LARGE SOUTH AFRICAN
MILITARY FORCE IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA) PERMIT.

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